



Warm Weather Safety Precautions

With the advent of warm weather, a large number of people and their pets will once again return to the Austin Parks and Recreation Department trails and parks to exercise. Taking safety precautions is especially critical if you and your pet have enjoyed an exercise-free winter break. Patrons are encouraged to take precautions to prevent heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and injuries when exercising, not only for themselves, but for their pets.

The Austin Parks and Recreation Department recommends the following safety tips for those enjoying the trails and parks this spring:

- Gradually increase your exercise regimen and build up your stamina.
- If you are starting an exercise program, check with your doctor before you begin
- If trying to get back in shape, start off at a slower pace than normal and walk at a pace that allows you to talk freely
- Pay attention to your body and stop exercising if are out of breath, feel dizzy, feel nauseated, or experience pain
- Toward the end of your walk, slow your pace to allow your pulse to return to its normal rate
- Drink plenty of water
- Take a cellular phone and identification with you, in case of an emergency
- Wear comfortable walking shoes or athletic shoes with good support
- Wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothing
- Wear sunglasses, a hat and use sunscreen
- If walking in low-light situations, wear reflective clothing
- Let someone know when and where you are going to walk.
- Stay on the trail
- Bring a walking stick for basic support on hills and slopes, which can also help fend off dogs or animals



- Beware of poisonous plants, insects, or snakes as well as aggressive dogs
- Be alert and look out for tripping hazards
- Be alert for suspicious people or questionable behavior on the trail

Pet Safety Precautions

Please make sure that your pet gradually builds up its stamina and exercise schedule too. Dogheirs.com states that some dogs are more at risk for heat exhaustion than others. These include dogs that are overweight, have heart or lung complications, or dogs with snub noses (Pugs, Pekingese, Boston Terriers, etc.). If there are signs of heat exhaustion, immediately move your dog to a cool and shaded area. A quick way to lower the dog's body temperature is by wrapping the dog in cool wet towels and placing them on the dog's feet, neck, chest and head. The dog can also be immersed in cool water, but make sure it's cool water and not cold. Allow the dog to drink plenty of water and keep the dog relaxed. PetWave.com states, "to treat heat stroke, establish an open airway and provide oxygen". All dogs which overheat should be examined by a veterinarian as soon as possible.



The following are heat exhaustion and heat stroke symptoms:

- Heavy panting
- Rapid heartbeat
- Bright red tongue
- Red or pale gums
- Bright red eyes
- Thick, sticky saliva
- Excessive drooling
- Foam around the mouth
- Restlessness
- Lethargy and weakness
- Dizzy and staggering
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Lack of muscle control or coordination
- Confusion or inattention
- Coma

Sources <http://www.parks.ca.gov> , <http://EzineArticles.com> , <http://www.dogheirs.com> , <http://goarticles.com> , <http://www.petwave.com>